



Smith Hill, Providence report (1980) – Prepared by the [Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission](#)

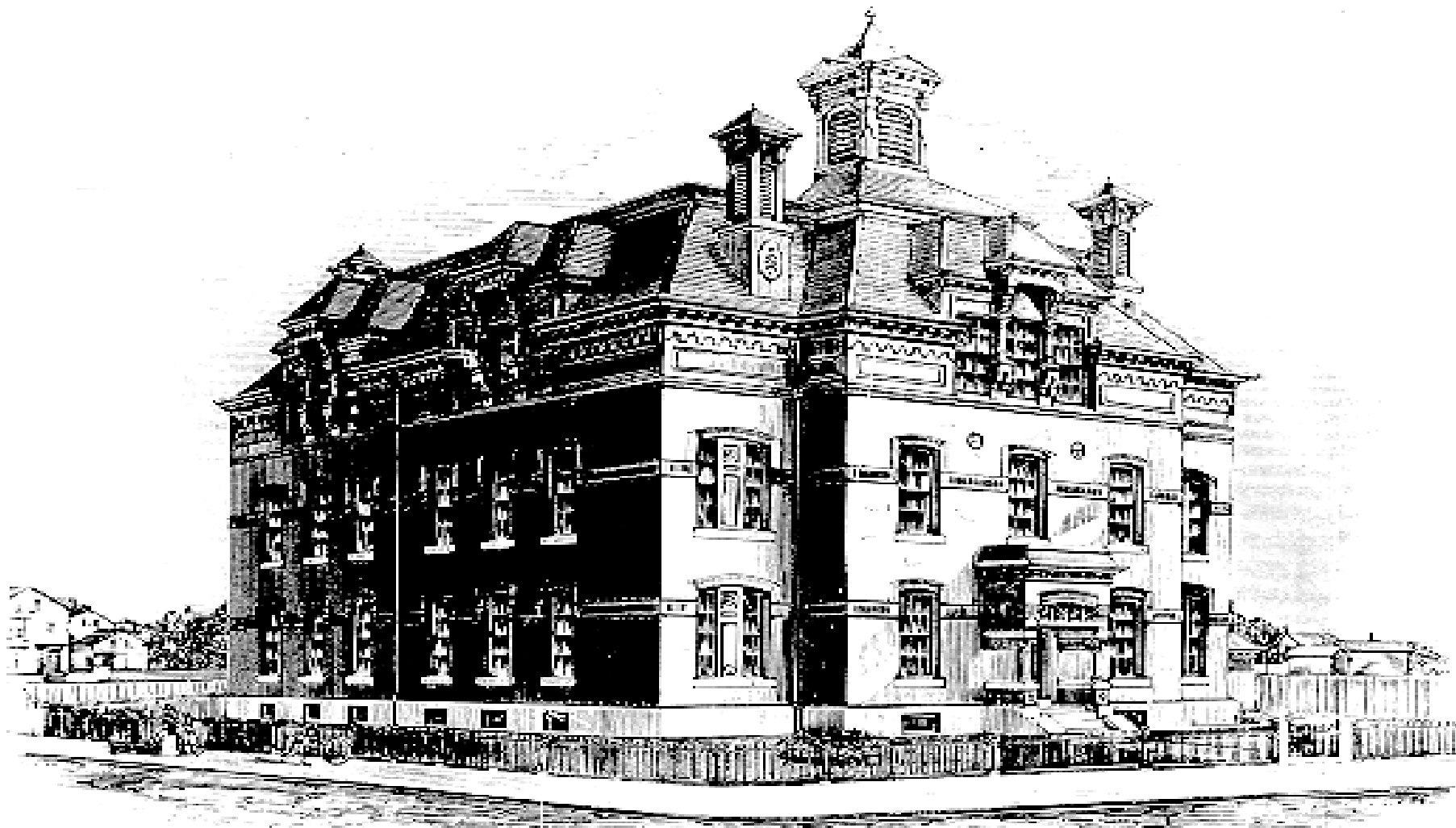


Fig. 46: Candace Street School (1877); formerly at the corner of Candace and Orms Streets; engraving, 1886.

The rapid late nineteenth-century population growth necessitated an increase in city services and several public schools, fire stations, and police stations were built.

The small wood-frame schoolhouse (erected when the area was part of North Providence) on the south side of Chalkstone Avenue just west of Douglas Avenue had become inadequate by the mid-1870s. In 1877, the City

of Providence erected a grammar school (razed in the 1960s) at the corner of Candace and Smith Streets. The large brick structure, designed in a High Victorian Gothic style by E. L. Angell, provided the first modern public school for the area. The grammar school was soon augmented with Smith Street Primary School at 396 Smith Street. Opened in September of 1885, it is a large, brick structure which reflects the Queen Anne style, loosely based on English seventeenth- and early

eighteenth-century forms, then in vogue for significant buildings. Probably the finest remaining example of Providence's brick schoolhouses of the late nineteenth century, the Smith Street School has been approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. As the population expanded and residential neighborhoods extended farther west, the Ruggles Street Primary School, completed in 1896, was opened to relieve pressure on the Smith Street facility.

Police and fire service were improved on Smith Hill in the 1870s with the construction of the Chalkstone Avenue Police Station in 1874 and the Smith Street Fire Station in 1875; both facilities were later superseded and eventually razed. The 1902 Fire Station, now altered for commercial purposes, still stands on Douglas Avenue, just west of Chalkstone.

Contemporary with the growth of Smith Hill's importance as a residential neighborhood, small commercial enterprises—such as grocers, cobblers, druggists, and butchers—were established to serve the needs of the inhabitants. Many of these early businesses were in mixed-use structures located in the middle of residential areas, such as the Off Grocery Store (later Remington Drugs) at 147 Smith. The nearby Higgins Florists Shop, like many area businesses, continues in the same location it has maintained since the early years of the twentieth century.

By the early twentieth century, however, neighborhood businesses had begun to consolidate their locations into major shopping nodes at intersections of principal streets like Chalkstone, Orms, and Smith. While some new buildings were erected specifically for commercial use, such as that for the Smith Hill Market (ca 1922) at 543 Chalkstone Avenue, much of the space used for these commercial centers was in altered residential buildings. Early houses were usually raised one story and a modern store was inserted at ground level, but from time to time the first story was simply gutted and completely renovated to suit the new tenant. Several examples of both types of commercial recycling remain at the shopping node at the intersection of Chalkstone Avenue and Smith Street, such as the building at 422 Smith Street, which has undergone renovation since 1977 as the headquarters for the Capitol Hill Interaction Council, a major local organization.



Fig. 48: View west on Douglas Avenue from the intersection of Chalkstone Avenue. The Douglas Avenue Fire Station is at the far right. Courtesy of the [Rhode Island Historical Society](#): RHi x3 2721.



Fig. 47: Smith Street Primary School (1885); 396 Smith Street.



Fig 49: Remington Company's Drug Store (1873); 147 Smith Street; postcard view, ca 1900. Courtesy of the [Rhode Island Historical Society](#): RHi x3 2166



Fig 50: Rhode Island State House (1895-1904); 90 Smith Street. Rendering by McKim, Mead and White for the State House Competition in 1891.

GOVERNMENT CENTER

Since the time when the Jefferson Plain was used for militia reviews in the early 1800s, the east end of the Smith Hill neighborhood has played host to governmental activities, particularly on the state level. In this century, this quarter has been taken over more and more by the state government until, now, it has become a wholly distinct entity different from the rest of the neighborhood in function and built form and, since 1962, physically set off by Interstate 95. Only the Smith Street and Orms Street bridges join the east end of Smith Hill—once the heart of the neighborhood and the home of St. Patrick's Parish with the rest of the neighborhood.

As early as the mid-eighteenth century, Smith Hill was the site of the Providence "work house," the early prison facility. Smith Hill was chosen as the site for a state prison which superseded municipal jails in the early nineteenth century. Located at Great Point, on the west shore of the cove near the location of today's Family Court Building, the granite, cruciform-plan, Greek Revival structure remained in use until the present Adult Correctional Institution at Howard opened in Cranston in 1878.

Soon thereafter, the City of Providence decided to fill the Cove Basin (by then a foul, muddy backwater), to create retaining walls for the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers, and to construct a new Union Station on an artificial knoll at the eastern edge of the former Cove Basin. This master plan improved access from the downtown to Smith Hill through the Francis and Gaspee Street underpasses and facilitated the concentration of state offices there; the elevated tracks, however, created a physical barrier which defined the northern limit of the downtown and discouraged development of the area between the Capitol, the railroad, and the Moshassuck River. The area north of the station was designed for and used as a freight yard for many years until the open space was converted to surface parking.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Old State House, still in government use at 150 Benefit Street, had become too small to accommodate the state government.

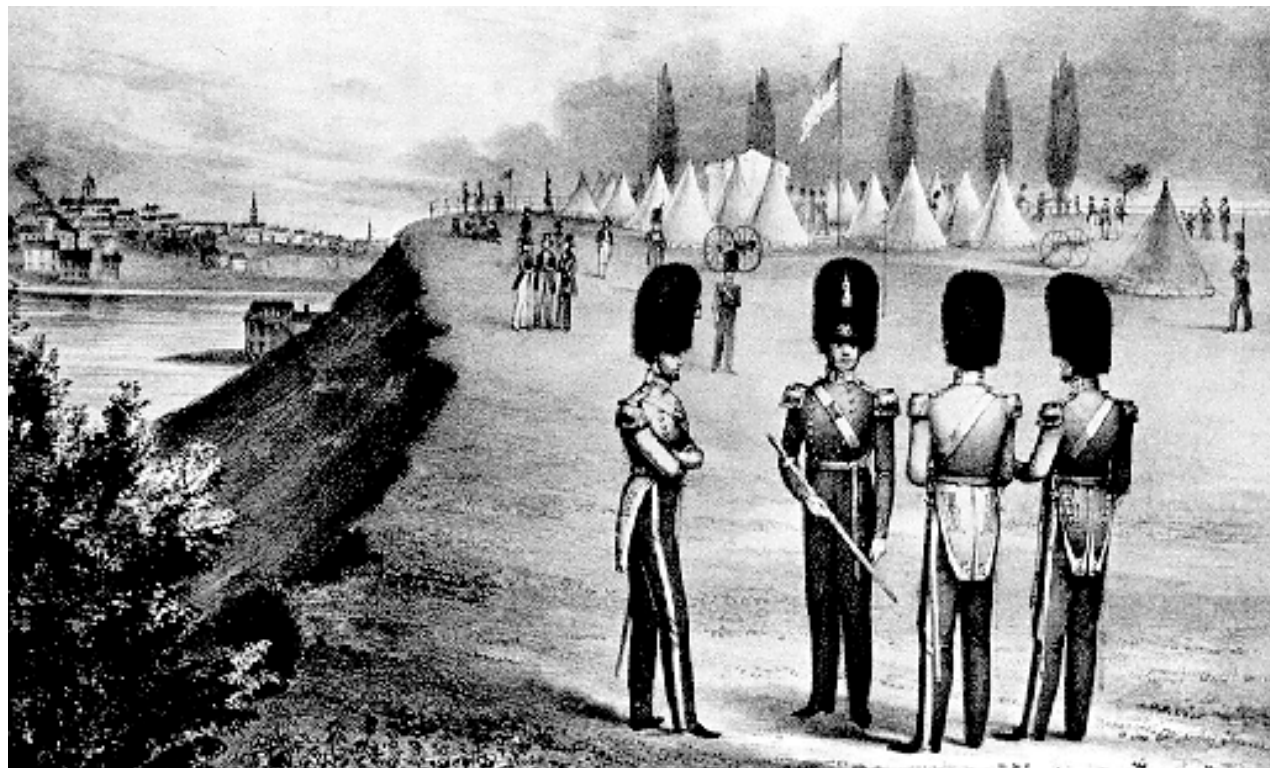


Fig. 51: "Encampment of the Boston City Guards on Smith's Hill, in the Early Forties"; drawing, 19th century. Courtesy of the [Rhode Island Historical Society](#): RHi x3 2174.

In 1891 the General Assembly appointed the State House Commission to determine the location and architects of a new capitol. Following the recommendation of the City Public Park Association, the committee chose a sixteen-acre parcel at the crest of Smith Hill opposite Saint Patrick's Church and commanding a magnificent view of downtown Providence. The following year the Commission held a design competition and selected the plans of the nationally prominent New York firm McKim, Mead and White. Construction on the elaborate, white marble, Beaux-Arts edifice was begun in 1896 and completed in 1901.

Soon after construction had begun on the Capitol, the state demolished the old prison—which had remained vacant and seriously deteriorating since 1878—to provide enlarged quarters for the Rhode Island Normal School at the corner of Francis and Gaspee Streets. The

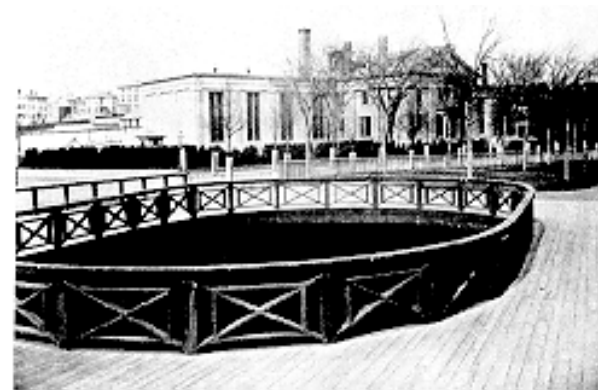


Fig. 52: State Prison (ca 1845); formerly near the intersection of Gaspee and Promenade Streets. Courtesy of the [Rhode Island Historical Society](#): RHi x3 1406.



Fig. 53: Competition drawing for the Rhode Island State House (1891); J.C. Cady, architect.



Fig. 54: Competition drawing for the Rhode Island State House (1891); Carrere & Hastings, architect.

large brick- and-terra-cotta structure, designed by the Providence firm Martin and Hall, was completed in 1898. The Normal School was enlarged in 1926 by the construction of a second building, the Henry Barnard School, at right angle to the original structure. Rhode Island Normal School, now Rhode Island College, moved to a new campus off Mount Pleasant Avenue in the 1960s, vacating this complex which has since become the Family Court Building and also houses several state agencies.

The burgeoning bureaucracy of twentieth-century government caused further development by the state in the eastern portion of Smith Hill. The State House had become cramped by the early 1920s, and the General Assembly voted in 1924 to purchase the Colonel Henry Smith House (1800) for land to build an adjunct office for the State House. The four-story brick structure with Georgian Revival detailing was built in 1928; the western wing was completed in 1935. In recent years the building has been used primarily to house the Registry of Motor Vehicles. The other major state-owned

building from this period was initially a private project. Veterans Memorial Auditorium was begun in the Masonic Temple in 1926 to replace quarters downtown. Only the exterior of the Beaux-Arts Structure was complete when the project became financially unfeasible, and construction ceased in 1928. The structure was acquired by the state in 1945 and first opened as an auditorium in 1951. Part of the auditorium wing continues to provide space for cultural events, state offices, and storage, but the eastern portion has remained vacant and only half finished for over fifty years.

By the 1960's, the state again found itself short of sufficient office space. A master plan for the development of a government center, designed by Edward Durell Stone, proposed the demolition of the State Office Building and the construction of a complex of five identical buildings on an axis north of the State House. This consolidation of state agencies was inaugurated by the construction of the health building in the early 1970s, and expansion of the complex is scheduled to occur as land becomes available and resources allow. Realization of this project will effect the final shift from

residential to institutional use of this portion of Smith Hill.

In 1979, the implementation of the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project (NECIP) for railway service and growing private sector concern for lack of vacant land immediately accessible to the downtown precipitated a plan to relocate the railroad tracks approximately a hundred yards north of its 1890s location and to construct a new location. The Capitol Center Project, unlike the 1960 proposal to move the tracks and station, retains the 1896 Union Station complex to be rehabilitated for commercial use but removes the fill used to elevate the tracks on either end of the station and seeks to incorporate the area north of the 1896 station into the central business district. The relocated tracks, which roughly follow the course of Gaspee Street and would be erected at present grade, would be bermed on both sides with landfill and covered in the area near the Capitol Grounds. Extensive environmental assessment and coordination of the parties involved preclude the construction's beginning until at least 1983.

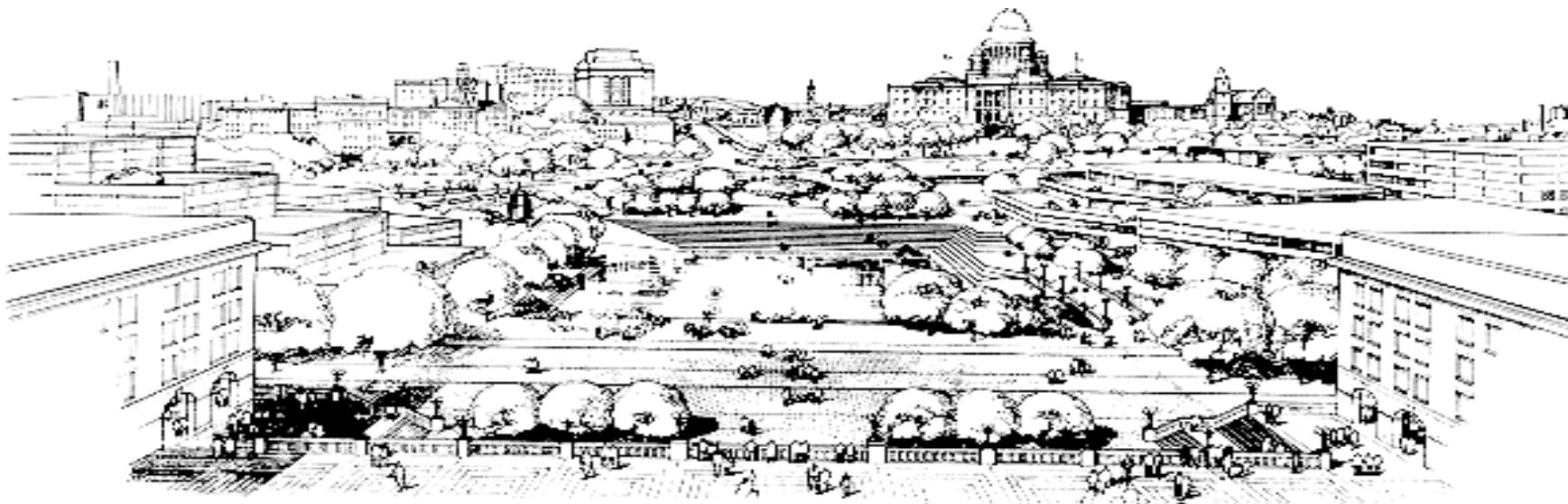


Fig.55: Capitol Center Project Rendering (1979); Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, architect.

ZENITH AND DECLINE

By the 1920s, Smith Hill had reached its peak. Most of the land in the area was occupied though building continued through the decade, filling the remaining undeveloped areas, especially along the western edge of Smith Hill. The population was dense, and most of the buildings were occupied by thriving, if not wealthy, citizens. A dynamic neighborhood equilibrium was well established, and, as a result, Smith Hill was an active, attractive residential neighborhood. The second wave of immigration, begun in the 1890s, somewhat changed the ethnic composition of Smith Hill, but the area remained heavily Irish, with several pockets of other ethnic groups, notably Russian Jews and Armenians, in the eastern half.

Industry was firmly established at the southern and eastern edges of Smith Hill, along the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers. Older companies continued to expand both production and physical plants, employing large numbers of residents. Remaining vacant land in these industrial corridors attracted other industries: the Wholesale Produce Market (1928) on Harris Avenue, Congdon and Carpenter (1930) on Promenade Street, and the Coca-Cola Bottling Plant (1939) on Pleasant Valley Parkway.

The small commercial nodes at the intersections of major streets continued to grow, as older dwellings were renovated for commercial use and new buildings, such as the commercial blocks at Smith and Chalkstone, were constructed.

In spite of the creation in 1920 of Saint Pius parish, which drew a number of parishioners from the western part of Smith Hill, Saint Patrick's parish continued to grow. A large new church building, begun in 1902, was completed by 1916, and a new building was erected at 244 Smith Street in 1928 to accommodate educational facilities. The 1916 church, structurally weakened, was demolished in 1979.

During this period of maturity and seeming stability, the seeds of urban decay that would almost choke the neighborhood were germinating. Suburbani-



Fig.56: St Patrick's Church (1916); formerly on Smith Street.

-zation was abetted by the popularity and increasing affordability of the automobile; the Providence City Planning Commission reported a continual decrease in population for most of Smith Hill during the 1920s, in spite of general stability for the city as a whole.

The fragile nature of Smith Hill's prosperity became apparent during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Because of the large number of factory workers living in the area, Smith Hill was one of the neighborhoods most heavily affected by layoffs: a 1939 study showed that the neighborhood had the second highest rate in the city of families on relief during the Depression.

By 1940, almost 20 per cent of the dwellings on Smith Hill were vacant, compared with 3 per cent for the city at large. Further, the proportion of owner-occupied dwellings had dropped to 19 per cent, compared with over 25 per cent for the rest of Providence. While no apparent physical deterioration or demolition had seriously changed the physical complexion of the neighborhood, it had become a less desirable place to live.

In 1939, the city created the Providence Housing Authority in response to federal and state legislation

founded on the New Deal concept of uplifting the poor by providing decent housing. By erecting public housing—a place where the poor could reside temporarily, to get back on their feet—the government hoped to break the cycle of poverty. To this end, the first housing project in Providence, Chad Brown, was begun in 1941 on a vacant parcel of land at the northwest edge of Smith Hill, at the corner of Chad Brown and Admiral Streets. Chad Brown remained filled through the war years and during the first decade after World War II. The units were well maintained by the city and by the tenants, and the project was considered successful.

In spite of the booming wartime economy in the early 1940s, Smith Hill continued its decline into the postwar years. Smith Hill's rate of decrease in population accelerated more rapidly than that of Providence at large after 1940. The prosperity of the 1940s provided the means for many families to move to more comfortable, newer dwellings in less congested parts of Providence or in suburban areas such as Cranston, Johnston, Warwick, or North Providence, where employment was increasingly available as companies moved to more modern facilities away from the center of Providence.

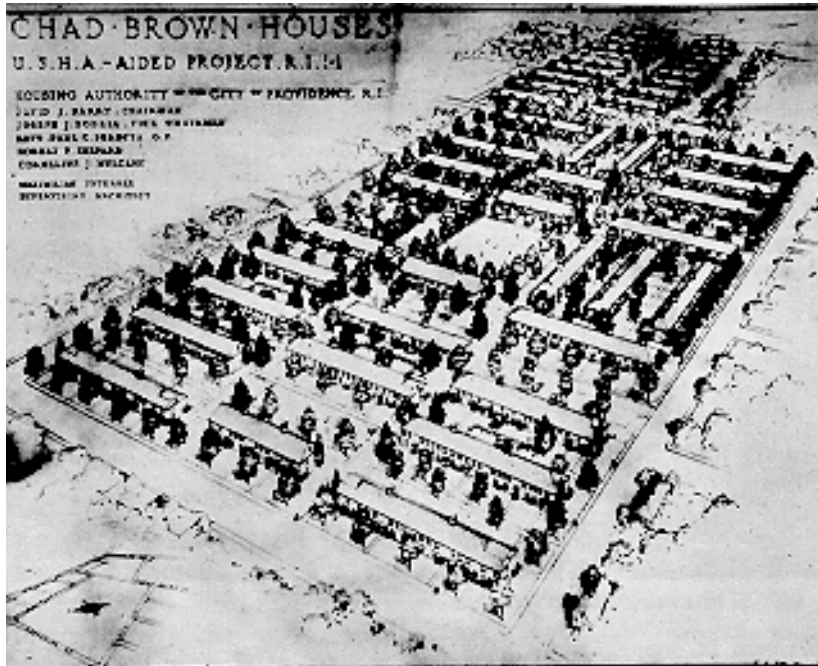


Fig. 57: Chad Brown Housing Project (1941et seq.); Maximilian Untersee, architect.

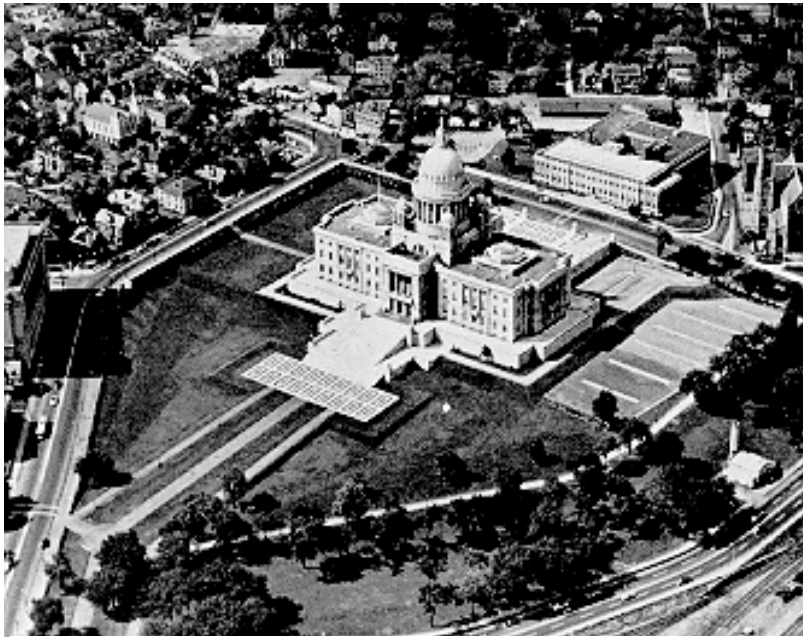


Fig.58: Aerial view of Smith Hill from the southeast (1958).
Courtesy of the [Rhode Island Historical Society](#); RHi x3 2171.

Smith Hill, Providence report (1980) – Prepared by the [Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission](#)

The urban renewal efforts of the early 1940s housing projects were augmented in 1949 by Congressional encouragement of slum clearance. This policy was a major factor in the immediate success of the housing projects; but concurrent complaints against racial segregation and the high percentage of persons earning more than the maximum allowable income in the housing projects precipitated the change in attitude toward the projects that led to their decline. The public at large came to perceive cheap public housing as a permanent alternative--a function it was never meant to serve--to dilapidated, expensive apartments. By the late 1960s, the Chad Brown project represented a more decayed environment than the surrounding neighborhoods.

Public housing was not the only government sponsored project which changed the complexion of Smith Hill. By the 1950s, plans were being drawn for the Providence link of the Interstate Highway System. The construction of Interstate Highway 95 in the early 1960s through the heart of Smith Hill not only necessitated the demolition of some of the finest remaining examples of nineteenth-century architecture on Smith Hill, but also separated Saint Patrick's Church from much of its parish. The isolation of the Smith Hill Plat of 1830, the area of earliest settlement, from the rest of the neighborhood similarly contributed to its abandonment and eventual decline as a residential area.

The industrial move to the suburbs most significantly affected Smith Hill by the 1960s when Brown and Sharpe, Nicholson File, and American Screw had left their large plants. Many of their employees who had lived on Smith Hill also moved to the suburbs, furthering the decline of the neighborhood. The West River Redevelopment Project of the late 1950s created an industrial park to the north of Smith Hill, but it is isolated by railroads and highways; though some residents work in these facilities employees come from all parts of Providence and surrounding towns. It is not a neighborhood industrial area.

By 1970, stripped of major sources of employment, designated as a housing-project area, and divided by an interstate highway, Smith Hill was considered an unattractive, outmoded neighborhood of densely built, antiquated housing with little bright in its future.

RETURN TO THE INNER CITY

In spite of the adverse conditions the neighborhood faced by the 1960s, it retained several factors to its advantage. Its buildings, while old and unfashionable, were largely intact and serviceable; further, they were inexpensive. Several of its major religious institutions remained extremely active. Perhaps most important of all, Smith Hill managed to maintain its sense of neighborhood identity. While over 90 per cent of the buildings on Smith Hill were erected before 1920-and over 60 per cent before 1900-most were structurally sound and had private bath and kitchen facilities. That many were multiple-family dwellings made them more readily useable than large single-family dwellings. Several important churches continued to serve large congregations. Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church was still an important community center for the many Armenians who had remained on Smith Hill since the early twentieth century. Gloria Dei Lutheran Church also remained active, in spite of the departure of a large number of its parishioners from the neighborhood.



Fig. 59: Smith Street: detail of doorway.



Fig. 60: Alma Street, detail of doorway.



Fig. 61: Pleasant Valley Parkway; detail of Coca-Cola bottling plant.

And although weakened by the geographical division of Smith Hill, St. Patrick's retained its important position in the religious community.

A number of life-time residents, however, remained in the neighborhood; their interest, as well as that of area businessmen, initiated a grass-roots renewal effort. In 1970, a group which had been meeting informally to discuss the future of the neighborhood formed the Capitol Hill Interaction Council (CHIC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to the revitalization of Smith Hill. Since CHIC's establishment, membership has increased to include many residents of Smith Hill. Activities include neighborhood festivals, and-most recently-a neighborhood improvement program, Project SHURE (Smith Hill Urban Revitalization Effort). SHURE is designed to help residents rehabilitate existing building stock and to improve the visual quality of the neighborhood.

This key, neighborhood-based effort has dovetailed with the return of residents to Smith Hill, many attracted to the Word of God Community at the re-organized

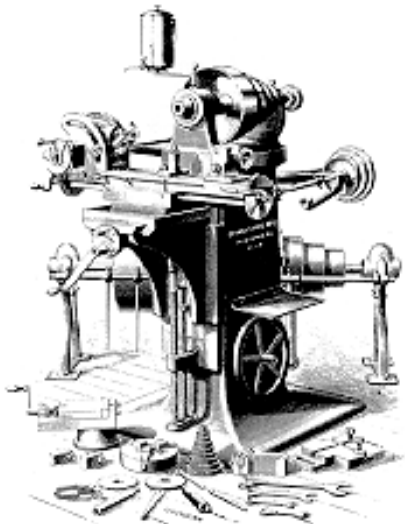
Saint Patrick's Church. In 1971, Bishop McVinney had agreed to the creation in Providence of a Pentecostal parish. (This spiritual-community movement began at Duquesne University in 1967 and has spread rapidly since.) Saint Patrick's Church was selected and placed in the hands of the present clergy, and the new parish has brought new families into the area to become part of the growing religious community.

Opportunities for nearby work have increased with the recycling of the Brown and Sharpe plant as the Capitol Industrial Center, a complex including state agencies, private businesses, and educational facilities.

Ten years ago, Smith Hill differed little from many inner-city neighborhoods caught on the downward spiral toward oblivion. Deterioration of the built and social fabrics, begun in the 1930s, continued in spite of government aid. While the neighborhood today still faces a number of urban problems, the recent growth of the neighborhood and broad-based concern for its future should assure its thriving as an urban residential center.

IV. SUMMARY

Smith Hill today is a bipartite urban area traversed by a major interstate highway. An upper- and middle-class suburban retreat from the city in its earliest years of development, it became a working-class residential neighborhood with the growth of industry along the rivers which form two of its borders. As Providence industry expanded, Smith Hill filled with small cottages and multiple-family dwellings to house the largely immigrant population attracted to the nearby factories. The eastern portion has been gradually appropriated for institutional and government buildings during the twentieth century—a divergence in land use formalized by the construction of I-95 in the early 1960s. The western section, a largely cohesive residential neighborhood with small commercial areas at major intersections, reflects its rapid growth between 1875 and 1925. While decline of the area between 1930 and 1970 reduced its population and desirability, Smith Hill remains densely built and largely intact, filled primarily with wood-frame, multiple-family dwellings. The last decade has witnessed a renewal of interest and activity in the neighborhood.



NO. 1 UNIVERSAL MILLING MACHINE.

Fig. 62: Brown & Sharpe Universal Milling (No. 1 Universal Milling Machine). Courtesy of the [Rhode Island Historical Society](#): RHi x3 2722.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

A preservation plan for Smith Hill should account for the government center, the residential neighborhood and the commercial zones as distinct entities; and any goals should be set with the long-term land-use potentials of each area in mind. The following recommendations include an evaluation of the present situation and suggestions toward solutions of preservation problems in each of the three areas. These recommendations are presented based on the premise that broad-based community participation along with energetic municipal coordination and direction are necessary to implement an effective neighborhood conservation program. Agencies exist at the local, state, and federal levels which can assist in various capacities, but long-lived results in the revitalization of Smith Hill can be accomplished only through continued community initiative and determination like that already evinced by present efforts.

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

The residential neighborhood is the largest part of Smith Hill and most strongly links the area with its past. While economic, social, and visual problems exist, the renewed influx of residents and the efforts of CHIC and other organizations portend a brightened future. Renewal should be thoughtfully planned to take maximum advantage of the neighborhood's existing resources.

1. The successful implementation of any neighborhood preservation program depends upon the residents' awareness of their architectural and cultural heritage. A number of educational projects could further this end.

A. An exhibition of Smith Hill historical documents, artifacts, and old photographs could be mounted in one of the neighborhood centers.

B. Older members of the community could be called upon to relate oral histories of Smith Hill. A compilation of these reminiscences would provide a wealth of material useful for students of Smith Hill history. C. Walking tours through Smith Hill sponsored by local organizations could emphasize history and development. Similarly, self-guided walking tours would provide a permanent educational tool for the neighborhood.

D. The marker program of the Providence Preservation Society, funded by a grant from the Mayor's Office of Community Development, has recently expanded to include Smith Hill. Increased publicity of this program could raise awareness of the history and value of buildings in the area and their proper restoration and maintenance.

E. Articles on the history of Smith Hill, culled from area residents and histories of the area, could be published in neighborhood newspapers such as the *Capitol Letter*.

F. Neighborhood festivals, already a part of Smith Hill life, could be organized around historical themes.

G. A unit on Smith Hill history should be incorporated into the public-school curriculum.

2. Private restoration and rehabilitation efforts should be encouraged to preserve the character of the neighborhood and to improve the built environment. While many have outmoded mechanical systems and would benefit from repair and maintenance, most buildings are well constructed. Rehabilitation of these houses would improve their appearance and raise their value and create a more pleasant and desirable neighborhood. Improvements to the housing stock would be less costly than replacement.

A. Revitalization efforts should be promoted and coordinated through community agencies and preservation organizations-such as the Smith Hill Urban Revitalization Effort (SHURE)-to increase effectiveness on a neighborhood basis.

B. Rehabilitation should be carried out in a manner sympathetic to the building. Retention of original detailing and architectural elements is important to the integrity of these buildings and contributes substantially to the character of the neighborhood. Resheathing of buildings with vinyl or aluminum siding should be strongly discouraged; not only is the character of the building diminished thereby, but artificial siding can often compound structural problems, such as water retention, and aggravate fire damage.

C. Residents of Smith Hill should be encouraged, whenever applicable, to use the Tax Reform Act of 1976 which contains important new tax incentives for preserving commercial properties (that is, income-producing properties) that qualify as certified historic structures, which are defined as depreciable structures: (1) listed on the National Register of Historic Places, (2) located in a National Register District and certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being of historical significance to the district, or (3) located in a local historic-zoning district certified by the Secretary of the Interior to be controlled by design-review procedures which will substantially achieve the purpose of preserving and rehabilitating buildings of historical significance. Specific details of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 can be obtained from a tax analyst or the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

COMMERCIAL

The Smith Hill commercial areas are integral parts of the neighborhood's historic fabric still viable today. These nodes, at major intersections, are important both to the commercial livelihood of the area and to social interaction among residents. Their preservation is important to the continuity of the sense of neighborhood. Any improvements should be made within the context of an urban, neighborhood commercial area, maintaining the scale, density, and character of the existing streetscape.

1. Owners of buildings should take advantage of low-interest loans and grants available through government programs, such as the storefront program administered through the Mayor's Office of Community Development (MOCD), to rehabilitate or restore these commercial structures.

2. A study of commercial areas should be carried out to establish development guidelines for long-range planning.

GOVERNMENT CENTER

The eastern portion of Smith Hill, dominated by the state government buildings and separated by I-95, has become an entity unto itself, distinct from the rest of the Smith Hill residential neighborhood. While some residential structures remain, the eventual expansion of state office facilities will completely appropriate the whole of this section. Growth in this area is inevitable, and it should be carefully planned to account for the existing resources.

1. State-owned buildings within the government-center

area should be studied thoroughly to determine the feasibility of their appropriate re-use. Many of these buildings merit rehabilitation and could provide additional space at a fraction of the cost of new construction. This study should focus on (A) the ability of state-owned or acquirable buildings to meet projected demands and (B) the practicability of their rehabilitation.

2. The Smith Hill Government Center master plan, well over ten years old, should be re-evaluated in light of the utility of existing buildings in the area. By coordinating rehabilitation with new construction, the state could maximize potential space and minimize cost.

3. The State House and its lawns should remain unaltered, and no new development-neither buildings nor parking facilities-should be allowed to encroach upon it. Development adjacent to the Capitol should be sensitive to the visual importance of this landmark.

4. The remaining residential buildings in the government-center development area should be preserved. As the state acquires these properties, careful planning should make use of these few, fine remaining examples of mid-nineteenth-century architecture. If expansion plans preclude their use *in situ*, these buildings should be offered for sale to move to suitable sites, preferably within the Smith Hill neighborhood.

5. Landscaping would greatly improve the visual quality of the former Rhode Island College site, now used by the Family Court and the University of Rhode Island Extension Division. These two buildings form a fine complex, which is now scarcely visible because of poorly planned parking and the neglected underbrush that virtually mask the facades of the two structures from Promenade Street.

APPENDIX A: NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAM

The National Register of Historic Places is a record maintained by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, United States Department of the Interior, of structures, sites, areas, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as the official inventory of the cultural and historic resources of the nation, it includes historical areas within the National Park System, National Historic Landmarks, federal properties nominated by federal agencies, and properties of state and local significance nominated by each state and approved by the Service. It is an authoritative guide for federal, state, and local governments and private groups and individuals everywhere, identifying those properties which are particularly worthy of preservation throughout the nation. Registered properties are protected from federally funded and licensed activities by a state and federal review process. Listing on the National Register is a prerequisite for eligibility for federal matching grants-in-aid funds which are administered within the state by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

The following properties are either on or have been approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Only properties which are on the National Register are eligible for grants-in-aid or Tax Act benefits. Those properties that are within National Register Districts must be certified by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission as historic structures in order to qualify for grants-in-aid or Tax Act benefits.

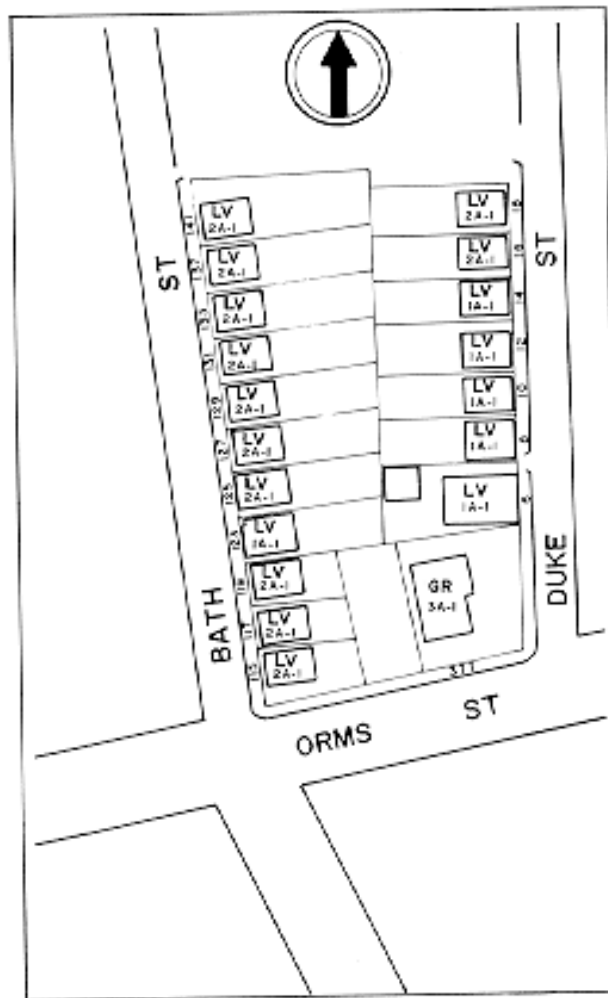


Fig. 63: Andrew Dickhaut Cottages Historic District.

INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURES ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES:

Rhode Island State House (90 Smith Street)
Admiral Esek Hopkins House (97 Admiral Street)

INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURES APPROVED BY THE RHODE ISLAND REVIEW BOARD FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES:

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (15 Hayes Street)
Northup-Preston-Martin House (17 Jefferson Street)
Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church (68 Jefferson Street)
Smith Street School (396 Smith Street)
Charles Dowler House (581 Smith Street)
Brown and Sharpe Complex (Promenade at Holden Streets)

DISTRICTS APPROVED BY THE RHODE ISLAND REVIEW BOARD FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES:

Andrew Dickhaut Cottages Historic District
Chalkstone Avenue Historic District
Oakland Avenue Historic District

APPENDIX B: TAX REFORM ACT OF 1976

The Tax Reform Act of 1976 contains important new tax incentives for preserving historic income-producing properties and alters provisions in the federal tax code which have worked against historical preservation. Commercial, industrial or rental residential properties that qualify as "certified historic structures" are entitled to tax advantages under the new act. A "certified historic structure" is defined in the law as a depreciable structure which is (A) listed in the National Register, (B) located in a National Register historic district and is certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being of historic significance to the district or (C) located in a historic-zoning district certified by the Secretary of the Interior to be controlled by design-review procedures which will substantially achieve the purpose of preserving and rehabilitating buildings of historical significance. One provision of the Act permits the owner of a certified rehabilitation of the property. Before passage of the Tax Reform Act, property owners were required to spread deductions over the life of the property. The new law allows larger tax savings in shorter time, thus encouraging owners to rehabilitate historic commercial properties. Another provision allows taxpayers to depreciate "substantially rehabilitated historic property" as though they were the original users of the property, entitling them to use accelerated depreciation which could previously only be used for new buildings. The code discourages demolition of historic properties in two ways. Demolition costs can no longer be deducted, and any new building replacing a demolished historic structure is denied accelerated depreciation. Although the Tax Reform Act of 1976 needs further analysis and clarification, it will clearly make the preservation of historic building more economically feasible. Any property owner interested in learning more about the historical preservation provisions of the Act should contact a tax analyst or the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

APPENDIX C: GRANTS-IN-AID PROGRAM

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established a program of matching grants-in-aid for development of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Once a year, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission accepts applications from individuals, public and private organizations, and state and local government units which own properties listed on the National Register.

Matching grants-in-aid can be used to acquire, protect, stabilize, rehabilitate, restore, or reconstruct National Register properties. Allowable work under the program includes exterior and interior restoration, structural repairs, installation or updating of utility systems, architectural fees, archeology, historical research, and the installation of protective systems. New construction, furnishings, and modern landscaping are not generally allowable.

The Commission receives many more applications each year than it is able to fund. The applications are evaluated according to the following criteria: the architectural and historical significance of the property; the degree to which the proposed use and treatment respect the historical and architectural values of the building; the urgency of the proposed work; the public benefit of the project, both educational and economic; the degree to which the property is threatened; and the geographical location of the property. The Commission may fund up to half the cost of a project. The grants awarded by the Commission have generally ranged in size from \$3,000 to \$50,000.

Once the Commission has selected the projects to be funded, the grantees must submit professionally prepared specifications and drawings developed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects. The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service in the Department of the Interior must review and approve the individual projects before any work can begin.

Financial assistance for the acquisition and development of National Register properties is provided for the benefit of the general public. Therefore, upon accepting a grant, the property owner must sign a preservation easement which is recorded with the deed to the property. The easement states that the owner agrees to maintain the property and not make any visual or structural changes without prior approval from the Commission. The number of years this agreement is in effect depends on the amount of funds received. Unless the grant-supported work is visible from a public right-of-way, the property must be open for public view twelve days a year.

Matching funds can come from any non-federal source; form Community Development Block Grant Funds; and in the form of donated services, real property, or equipment. Grant applicants are urged to submit requests for the amount for which they can actually match and realistically complete in one year.

Applicants will be accepted by the Commission during March and April each year. The applicants are reviewed during May and June and the Commission selects the projects in July, after Rhode Island is notified of its annual federal appropriation for the grants-in-aid program. Those selected are first awarded funds to have the necessary specifications and drawings prepared. Development grants are officially awarded once the specifications have been accepted by the Commission. Project work may begin when the project has been approved by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service after the start of the federal fiscal year, October 1st. Project work must be completed within a year.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY FORM AND MAPS

A standard survey from, the "Historic Building Data Sheet," has been prepared by the Preservation Commission for use throughout the state. On the form a property is identified by plat and lot numbers, street numbers, ownership at the time the survey was conducted, present use, neighborhood land use, neighborhood land use, and a photograph.

Each property is also identified by one or more broad period time-frames which denote the original construction date and date(s) of major additions or alterations: P=prehistoric (before 1636), C=Colonial (1700-1800), F=Federal (1775-1840), GR=Greek Revival (1825-1865), EV=Early Victorian (1840-1870), LV=Late Victorian (1866-1910), ET=early twentieth century (1900-1940), MT=mid-twentieth century (1940-1975), and LT=late twentieth century (1975-present).

The "COMMENTS" section is used for brief notations regarding a building's style, structure, details, and architectural significance. The "HISTORY & SOURCES" sections includes notes on individuals, organizations, and events associated with the building; dates and nature of significant additions or alterations; selected bibliographical and pictorial references; and identification of the building on historical maps and in street directories.

The four "EVALUATION" sections are intended as tools for quick reference to appraise various aspects of a property's preservation value. In general, the key factors that indicate the reason for preserving structures have to do with their visual significance—that is, "Architectural value" and "Importance to neighborhood." Other factors, such as condition, should be seen as pluses. Nor should a low historical rating be allowed to militate against the preservation of buildings deemed of architectural significance or those important in the neighborhood context.

The evaluation of a structure's exterior physical condition is rated on a 0, 2, 3, 5 scale, without regard to its architectural merits. Buildings assigned "5" are in

excellent physical condition (original or altered). Those rated "3" are in good condition, with only slight evidence of the need for improvements, such as repainting or minor repairs. Structures rated "2" are in fair condition, and may require substantial work, such as resheathing, or repairs to porches, fenestration and so on. Buildings rated "0" are in poor physical condition, and probably require extensive work if they are to be retained. These ratings are based upon observation of the exterior only, and do not reflect interior appearance or structural, electrical, and mechanical conditions.

The evaluation of the grounds, either of a building or a site, is rated on a 0, 1, 2 scale. Those that are in

good condition and are a visual asset to the environment are assigned "2."

The "1" rating indicates that the grounds do not detract from the surrounding area. The "0" rating applies to grounds that have a negative impact on the environs.

The evaluation of the neighborhood's physical condition is based on a 0, 2, 3 scale. "Neighborhood," in this context denotes the immediate area surrounding a surveyed property, and does not necessarily reflect physical features such as street blocks or demographic boundaries. Neighborhoods rated "3" are characterized by a uniformly high standard of maintenance of both buildings and grounds.

HISTORIC BUILDING DATA SHEET
PROVIDENCE STATEWIDE SURVEY

FILE NO. PLAT 40 LOT 24 L35
 ADDRESS 121-129 Oakland Avenue
 OWNER Marion & Alan S. Wilson

PRESENT USE:
 1 Fam 2 Fam multi X
 pub comm mixed indus
 retail agr
 other

NEIGHBORHOOD LAND USE:
 res 2 comm indus
 pub agr woods
 other

PERIOD/STYLE: P C F GR EV LV ET MT LT

DESCRIPTION: Stories: 3-1/2
 Roof: gable (flat) etc X cross
 gabled (flat) and cross 1 hip
 monitor mansard flat
 other

Walls: clapboard 1-2 brick stone
 single 5 (wood) modern comp
 other

Foundations: 2 1/2 stone brick 7
 other slab

Alterations: good poor none X
 Rare 50% typical of area X

COMMENTS:

HISTORY & SOURCES:

EVALUATION:

Physical Condition	Structure	Grounds	Neighborhood	Architectural Value	Importance to Neighborhood	Historical Value	Total Score
5	3	2	0	50	10	10	53
3	2	0	0	10	5	0	15
2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

DATE:

Fig. 64: Sample survey form.

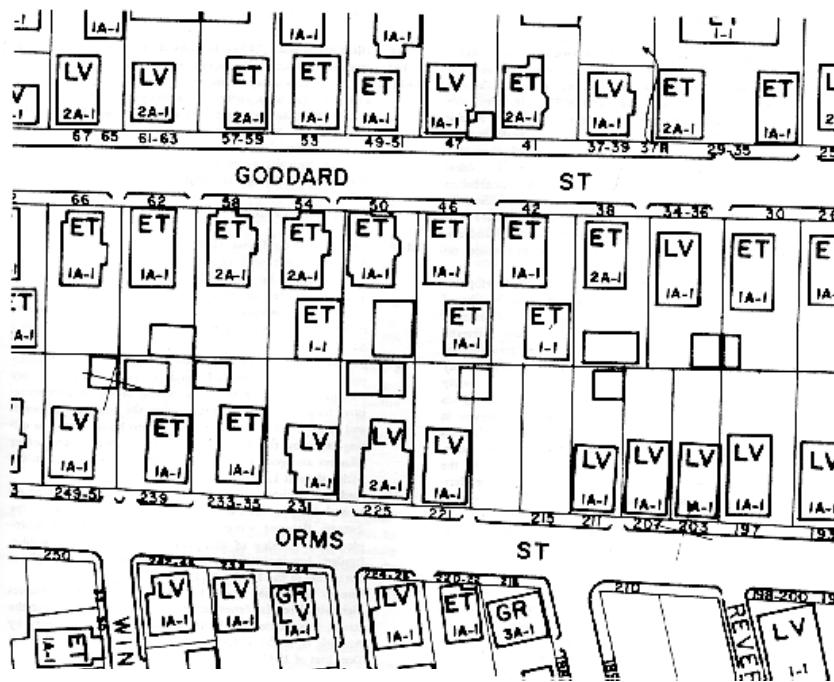


Fig. 65: Sample section of survey map.

Those assigned a "2" have well kept properties in much of the area, but also have sections where the need for improvement is readily apparent. The "0" rating is used for areas which, for the most part detract from the visual quality of the community as a whole.

Architectural ratings are assigned on a 0, 10, 20, 30, 38 scale. The "38" rating is reserved for a generally small number of buildings deemed outstanding importance to the community and which, in most cases, are also of at least regional significance. The "30" rating indicates a structure of meritorious architectural quality, well above the local norm. The "20's" and "10's" constitute the majority of buildings surveyed. They are of local value by virtue of interesting or unusual architectural features Or because they are good representatives of building types which afford an index to the community's physical development and define the visual character of its building stock. Structures rated "20" and "30" are essential to an area's historic character. They provide a visual context which defines the historic quality of Smith

Hill and create an important background to the key structures rated "38." Buildings rated "0" are undistinguished architecturally and make no positive contribution to the physical environment. Structures that have been extensively and unsympathetically altered are given lower ratings than similar building types which afford an index to the community's physical development and define the visual character of its building stock. Structures rated "20" and "30" are essential to an area's historic character. They provide a visual context which defines the historic quality of Smith Hill and create an important background to the key structures rated "38." Buildings rated "0" are undistinguished architecturally and make no positive contribution to the physical environment. Structures that have been extensively and unsympathetically altered are given lower ratings than similar buildings in their original state. Monuments, markers, and civic sculptures are assigned ratings on the basis of general visual and associative qualities which do not necessarily reflect artistic integrity.

A property's importance to its neighborhood is rated on a 0, 5, 10, 14 scale, with "neighborhood" used according to the above definition. The "14" rating denotes a property that is a key visual landmark, of the utmost importance to the visual integrity of its environs. Those rated "10" make an important visual contribution either by virtue of individually distinguished qualities or due to characteristics of form, scale, and massing which help maintain the visual continuity of the surrounding area. The "5" rating indicates a minor, but positive, contribution in either of the above respects or a property which may be of visual interest unto itself, but one which is not especially compatible with its physical context. "0" applies to properties which have a decisively negative effect on the neighborhood.

Historical value is also rated on a 0, 10, 20, 30, 38 scale. The "38" rating is assigned to properties associated with individuals (including architects), organizations, or events which are of historic significance on the national level. Those of regional or state importance are rated "30." The "20" rating applies to entries related to noteworthy local developments and also includes buildings which, by virtue of their age, are considered to make a major contribution to the community's historic environment. The "10" rating is used to designated properties of no known historic interest at the present time. Data from the survey sheets have been transferred to a series of detailed maps, drawn on a 1" = 80' scale. These maps depict every structure, regardless of date or historical importance, along with the address, a code for period or style, and the architectural and historic ratings. They make information pertaining to the cultural resources of the Smith Hill area available for all planning purposes.